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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/24/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KTIP](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: REPORTS OF "BABY FARM" DEMONSTRATE GAP IN
COMMUNICATION WITH NAPTIP

Classified By: CONSUL GENERAL DONNA BLAIR FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (SBU) Summary: An October 8 BBC News article claimed the discovery of a "baby farm" in Enugu, which was allegedly holding pregnant women hostage, then selling their babies to traffickers after birth. While an official from the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and Other Related Matters (NAPTIP) knew little about the case, the BBC journalist who wrote the article confirmed that this is one of several similar raids by the police on hospitals which sell newborn babies in Enugu. The police appear to be operating independent of NAPTIP, indicating a lack of coordination between these two key anti-trafficking agencies.
End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) In response to inquiries from Washington, including the office of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, PolOff sought clarification on a BBC News article that reported Nigerian police had raided a hospital keeping young pregnant women and then selling their babies for forced labor and sex trafficking. On October 16, PolOff spoke with the zonal head of NAPTIP for the South East region, Ijeoma Okoronkwo, based in Enugu. Okoronkwo stated that NAPTIP had not been contacted by the police who conducted the raid, nor any other state agency, and thus, had no specific information on the baby farm., She did believe the reports to be true, although exaggerated, as it is unlikely the babies were to be used for sex trafficking, but rather for adoptions or domestic labor.

¶3. (C) The BBC journalist who wrote the article, Abdussalam Ahmed, is also based in Enugu. In an October 17 conversation with PolOff, he indicated that soon after the raid, the Police Commissioner had invited him for a briefing at the Enugu state headquarters of the Nigerian Police to interview the police officers involved in the raid. He was not given access to the hospital that had been raided, but the police openly answered all of his questions regarding the case. Mr. Ahmed believed that the babies were to be sold for adoption or to be raised for domestic labor. He indicated that there are general rumors in the region that such babies are often used for spiritual rituals or sex trafficking, although there is no solid evidence to support these suspicions. In his investigation of the incident, the nurses and owners of the hospital had claimed in that they were helping the young pregnant mothers and rescuing babies that would otherwise be abandoned.

¶4. (SBU) Ahmed indicated that he had been alerted to similar cases in June when another clinic in Enugu was raided, in which police rescued twenty pregnant women. This case did make international news, and NAPTIP was actively involved in the case. In the current case, however, despite Nigerian news reports that NAPTIP was to take over care for the seven women rescued from the hospital, Okoronkwo stated that NAPTIP was unaware of the women,s location or the events after the raid.

¶5. (C) Comment: As of October 16, over one week after the raid, NAPTIP officials had not been contacted regarding specifics of the case or location of the rescued women. This disconnect between law enforcement and NAPTIP may be intentional, given that the police immediately contacted an international media outlet to raise awareness of their own efforts. The police did not acknowledge NAPTIP,s role at the time of the raid or during the subsequent investigation. The lack of communication between law enforcement and the agency indicates that there continues to be a gap in anti-trafficking efforts between state police and NAPTIP.
End Comment.

¶6. (U) This cable has been cleared by Embassy Abuja.
BLAIR